

Struck by Backhoe

In mid 2006, an equipment operator suffered amputation of his left foot and leg above the ankle and partial amputation of his right hand and arm above the wrist. The equipment operator had parked his backhoe along a 6-degree slope to check on a co-worker. He did not apply the parking brake because he knew it did not work. He lowered the bucket to secure the backhoe from movement.

While observing the work of the co-worker, the co-worker noticed that the backhoe began to roll toward the operator and shouted out a warning. As the equipment operator turned, he tried to jump out of the way of the backhoe, but the bucket caught his leg and arm. His left leg and arm were so mangled that the doctors had no choice but to amputate.

The investigation found that while an inspection of the backhoe was allegedly performed the day before, there was no checklist used, routine maintenance was not performed, and no written records were kept. In addition, the inoperable parking brake was reported 6 months ago and was still not fixed. The backhoe legs could not be lowered to assist the brakes because of hydraulic leakage.



Citations were issued totaling \$3,000.

Recommendations:

1. Defective equipment should be tagged out of service until the repairs are made.
2. Equipment should be periodically inspected and records maintained of the inspections.
3. All earthmoving equipment require a service braking system capable of stopping and holding the equipment fully loaded.